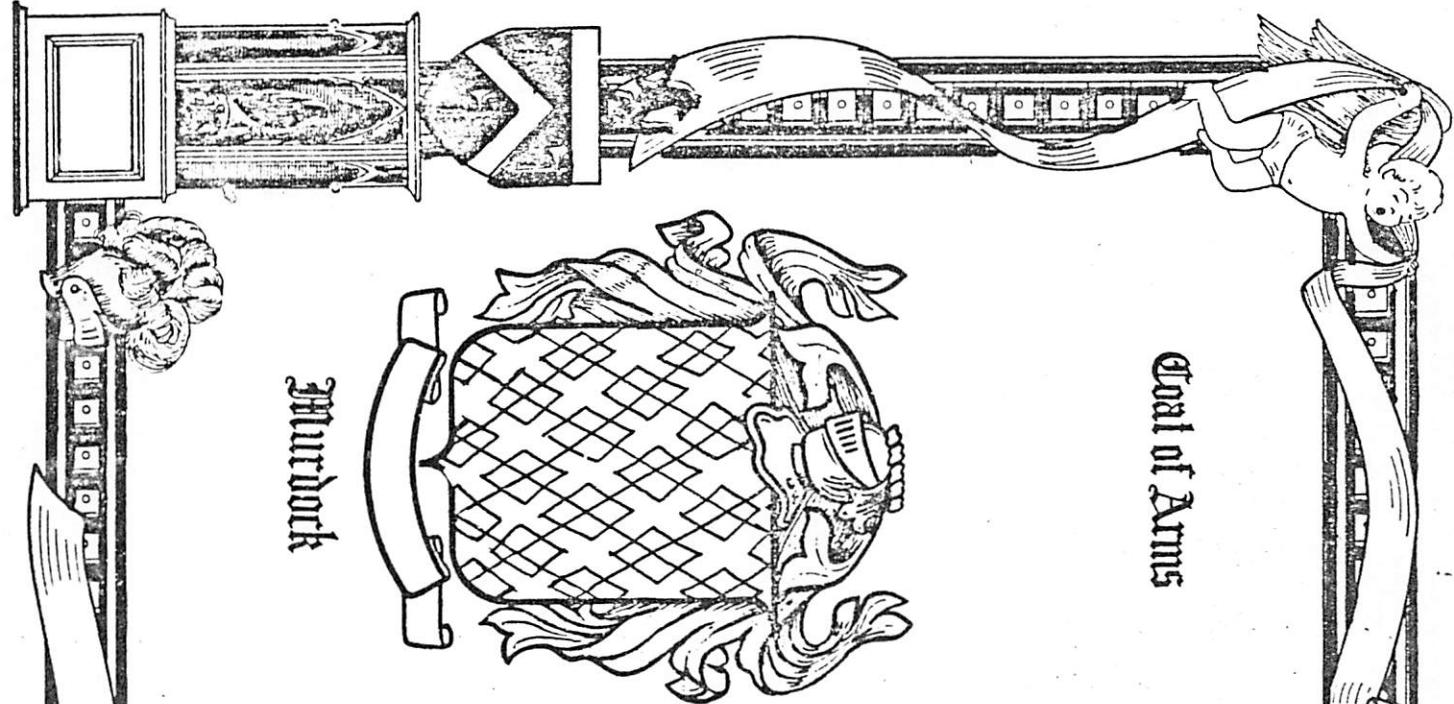


Coat of Arms

Historiography

Murdock

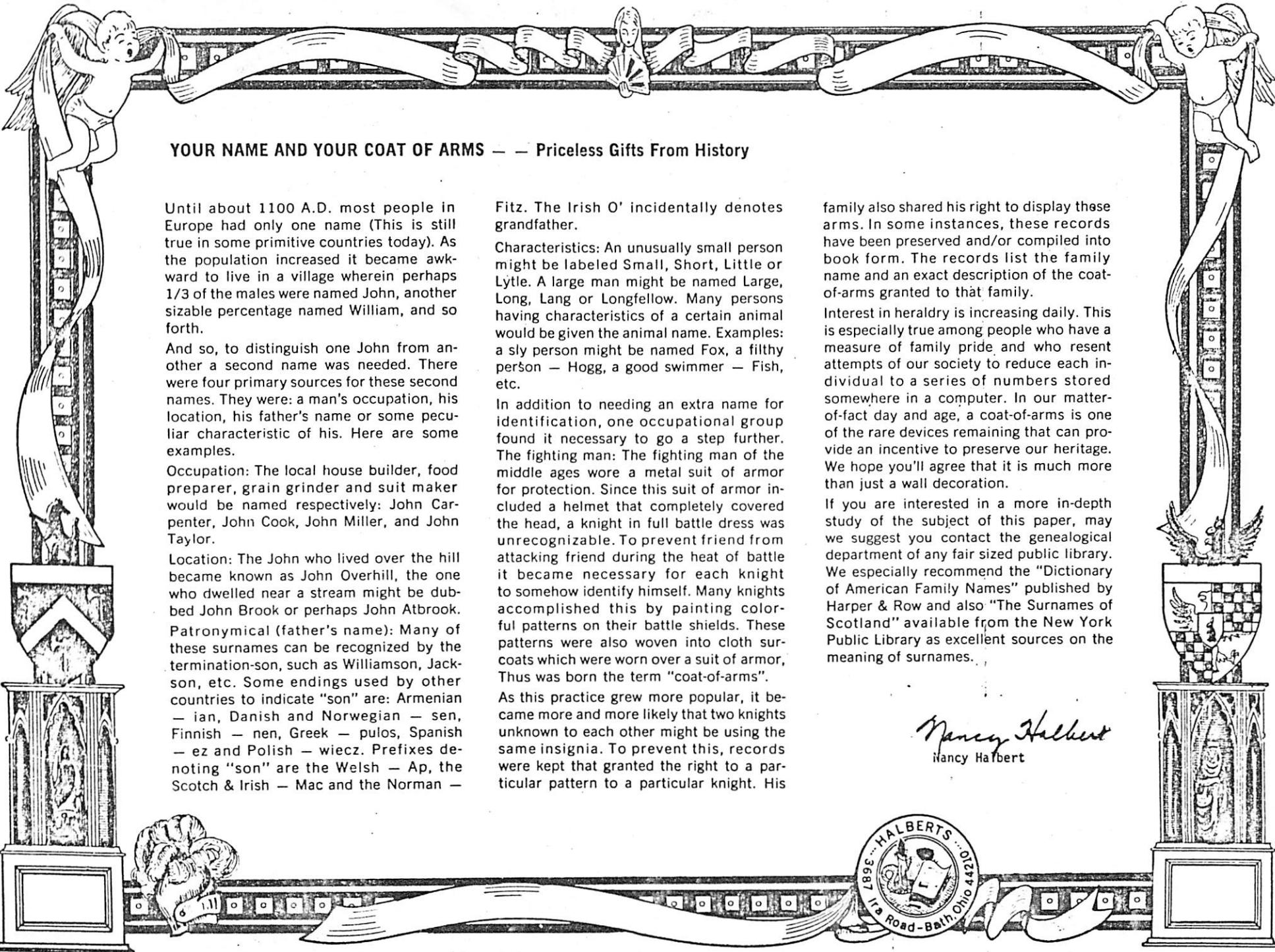


The Murdock Coat of Arms illustrated left was drawn by an heraldic artist from information officially recorded in ancient heraldic archives. Documentation for the Murdock Coat of Arms design can be found in Rietstap Armorial General. Heraldic artists of old developed their own unique language to describe an individual Coat of Arms. In their language, the Arms (shield) is as follows:

"On a field of or, fretty sable."

When translated the blazon also describes the original colors of the Murdock Arms as it appeared centuries ago. Family mottos are believed to have originated as battle cries in medieval times. A Motto was not recorded with this Murdock Coat of Arms. Individual surnames originated for the purpose of more specific identification. The four primary sources for second names were: occupation, location, father's name, or personal characteristics. The surname Murdock appears to be patronymical in origin, and is believed to be associated with the English, meaning, "son of Murdock." The supplementary sheet included with this report is designed to give you more information to further your understanding of the origin of names. Different spellings of the same original surname are a common occurrence. Dictionaries of surnames indicate probable spelling variations of Murdock to be Murdoch, and Murdaci. Although bearers of the old and distinguished Murdock name comprise a small fraction of the population there are a number who have established for it a significant place in history. They include: JAMES MURDOCK (1791-1856) D.D. and Learned American Congregationalist. Was appointed Professor of Sacred Rhetoric and Ecclesiastical History at the Theological Seminary of Andover. He translated, from the German Mosheim's "Institutes of Ecclesiastical History", and published several original works. WILLIAM MURDOCK (1754-1839) British engineer and inventor. He invented improvements in the steam engine, and made working models of locomotive steam engines. WALTER MURDOCK (Murdoch) (b. 1874) Scottish born educator and anthologist in Australia. Author of "The Making of Australia", an historical work. There is a MURDOCK (Murdac) who is listed as Dean of Appleby during the reign of Henry II, from 1133 to 1189. The marriage of Job Nutt to SARAH MURDOCK (Murdoch), is recorded in Canterbury in the year 1680. No genealogical representation is intended or implied by this report and it does not represent individual lineage or your family tree.





YOUR NAME AND YOUR COAT OF ARMS — — Priceless Gifts From History

Until about 1100 A.D. most people in Europe had only one name (This is still true in some primitive countries today). As the population increased it became awkward to live in a village wherein perhaps 1/3 of the males were named John, another sizable percentage named William, and so forth.

And so, to distinguish one John from another a second name was needed. There were four primary sources for these second names. They were: a man's occupation, his location, his father's name or some peculiar characteristic of his. Here are some examples.

Occupation: The local house builder, food preparer, grain grinder and suit maker would be named respectively: John Carpenter, John Cook, John Miller, and John Taylor.

Location: The John who lived over the hill became known as John Overhill, the one who dwelled near a stream might be dubbed John Brook or perhaps John Atbrook. Patronymical (father's name): Many of these surnames can be recognized by the termination-son, such as Williamson, Jackson, etc. Some endings used by other countries to indicate "son" are: Armenian — ian, Danish and Norwegian — sen, Finnish — nen, Greek — pulos, Spanish — ez and Polish — wiecz. Prefixes denoting "son" are the Welsh — Ap, the Scotch & Irish — Mac and the Norman —

Fitz. The Irish O' incidentally denotes grandfather.

Characteristics: An unusually small person might be labeled Small, Short, Little or Lytle. A large man might be named Large, Long, Lang or Longfellow. Many persons having characteristics of a certain animal would be given the animal name. Examples: a sly person might be named Fox, a filthy person — Hogg, a good swimmer — Fish, etc.

In addition to needing an extra name for identification, one occupational group found it necessary to go a step further. The fighting man: The fighting man of the middle ages wore a metal suit of armor for protection. Since this suit of armor included a helmet that completely covered the head, a knight in full battle dress was unrecognizable. To prevent friend from attacking friend during the heat of battle it became necessary for each knight to somehow identify himself. Many knights accomplished this by painting colorful patterns on their battle shields. These patterns were also woven into cloth surcoats which were worn over a suit of armor. Thus was born the term "coat-of-arms".

As this practice grew more popular, it became more and more likely that two knights unknown to each other might be using the same insignia. To prevent this, records were kept that granted the right to a particular pattern to a particular knight. His

family also shared his right to display these arms. In some instances, these records have been preserved and/or compiled into book form. The records list the family name and an exact description of the coat-of-arms granted to that family.

Interest in heraldry is increasing daily. This is especially true among people who have a measure of family pride and who resent attempts of our society to reduce each individual to a series of numbers stored somewhere in a computer. In our matter-of-fact day and age, a coat-of-arms is one of the rare devices remaining that can provide an incentive to preserve our heritage. We hope you'll agree that it is much more than just a wall decoration.

If you are interested in a more in-depth study of the subject of this paper, may we suggest you contact the genealogical department of any fair sized public library. We especially recommend the "Dictionary of American Family Names" published by Harper & Row and also "The Surnames of Scotland" available from the New York Public Library as excellent sources on the meaning of surnames.

Nancy Halbert
Nancy Halbert

